



CERTIFICATE of RECOGNITION

By virtue of the authority vested by the Constitution in the Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, there is hereby officially recognized:

MARINE DEBRIS REDUCTION MONTH

WHEREAS, all Virginians rely on the health of our ocean for its important provision of wholesome seafood, tourism, energy production, magnificent wildlife, recreation, safe and efficient boating and shipping, all of which contribute to the happiness, prosperity and well-being of our Commonwealth's families and communities; and

WHEREAS, marine debris, largely in the form of improperly disposed of plastics and plastic bags, food and beverage containers, cigarette butts, balloons, and derelict fishing gear, has been rapidly accumulating in Virginia's rivers, marshes and bays and washing out into the Atlantic Ocean; and

WHEREAS, debris in the ocean such as balloons, plastic bags and cigarette butts can be mistaken for food and ingested by sea turtles, birds and other wildlife, and plastic debris such as six-pack holders, fishing lines and gear can entangle or entrap whales, dolphins, seals, birds and other sea creatures; and

WHEREAS, plastic debris (including cigarette butts) can take hundreds of years to degrade and when it does, can become "microplastics" that are ingested by animals and incorporated into the animal and human food chain; and

WHEREAS, improperly discarded plastics can contain potentially harmful elements such as phthalates, bisphenol A, styrene, vinyl chloride and flame retardants which can leach into water and present an increasing health threat to humans, fish and wildlife; and

WHEREAS, Virginia's communities spend millions of tax dollars per year in litter collection and in beach cleaning to avoid the loss of vital tourism dollars and ensure the safety of tourists; and

WHEREAS, Virginia's Coastal Zone Management Program, in partnership with Clean Virginia Waterways, the Virginia Aquarium, the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, Virginia Commonwealth University and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is developing a Marine Debris Management Plan to find economically and socially feasible solutions for reducing marine debris, such as biodegradable components on fishing gear and replacing celebratory balloon releases with commemorative tree plantings; and

WHEREAS, Virginia's efforts to create a Marine Debris Management Plan could provide a model for the Mid-Atlantic region and the U.S. Atlantic coast; and

WHEREAS, June 8th, 2013 is *Oceans Day* and it is fitting to raise awareness of the global ocean crisis of accumulating marine debris, stress the importance of changing our behavior of allowing plastic and other debris to end up in the ocean, and to celebrate the efforts of all of those who care enough to help in reducing marine debris;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Robert F. McDonnell, do hereby recognize June 2013 as **MARINE DEBRIS REDUCTION MONTH** in our **COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA**, and I call this observance to the attention of all our citizens; and

FURTHERMORE, I encourage everyone to take action to reduce trash and litter that makes its way into our waterways, the Chesapeake Bay, and the ocean.




Governor


Secretary of the Commonwealth